

Application Serial No. 10/733,478
Reply to December 2, 2005 Office Action

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Docket No. 1232-5228

REMARKS

Reconsideration of the above-identified application in view of the foregoing amendments and following remarks is respectfully requested.

Status of the Claims

Claims 1-10 and 12-14 in this application are currently pending and rejected.

Claims 1, 5, and 12 are independent in form.

Claims 1, 5, and 12 are amended herein. No new matter is introduced by these amendments.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claim 12 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by Park, U.S. Patent No. 5,477,271 ("Park"). Additionally, claim 12 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by Sekine et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,561,498 ("Sekine"). Applicants respectfully disagree with the characterization of the claims and prior art in the stated rejections and respectfully traverse these rejections.

Park discloses that a sampling area is divided into sub-areas and that an integration is performed using weight values given to the sub-areas, which include pixels (col. 4, line 66 – col. 5, line 13). As shown in FIGS. 5A and 5B, Park discloses a central area 62 and a surrounding area 64. A weight value of "1" is assigned to the central area 62 and a weight value of either "0" or "0.5" is assigned to the surrounding area 64. Park further discloses that focus control is performed using these values to concentrate on the central area 62 (col. 5, lines 14-20).

Sekine discloses an automatic image stabilization device that is arranged to detect image movement information from a sensed image signal produced from an image sensor and to reduce the image movement, which is comprised of a movement detecting circuit that obtains

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movement vector information for each of a plurality of parts of an image plane, and a weight setting circuit arranged to attach weight to each movement vector information and to vary the weighting degree according to photographing conditions (See Abstract). That is, Sekine discloses an image stabilization device that distinguishes camera shake from motion of a main object by assigning weights to extracted motion vectors. As shown in FIGS. 3(a) – 3(d), a weight is assigned to each detection area.

However, both Park and Sekine fail to disclose or suggest an image sensing apparatus comprising “a weighting device which weights a signal component corresponding to *inside of* a focus detection area sensed by said image sensing device ... *wherein in the case that a plurality of focus detection areas exist, a weighting value weighted by said weighting device is different from the case that only one focus detection area exists*” as required by claim 12.

Applicants respectfully submit that the present invention as claimed is neither taught nor suggested by, and therefore is neither anticipated nor rendered obvious in view of, Park or Sekine. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections of claim 12 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Park and as being anticipated by Sekine.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1-10 and 12-14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) allegedly as being unpatentable over Park in view of Takizawa, U.S. Patent Publication No. 2005/0,030,415 (“Takizawa”).

As stated above, Park discloses that a sampling area is divided into sub-areas and that an integration is performing using a weight value given to the sub-areas, which include pixels (col. 4, line 66 – col. 5, line 13). As shown in FIGS. 5A and 5B, Park discloses a central

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area 62 and a surrounding area 64. A weight value of "1" is assigned to the central area 62 and weight value of "0" or "0.5" is assigned to the surrounding area 64. Park further discloses that focus control is performed using these values to concentrate on the central area 62 (col. 5, lines 14-20).

Takizawa discloses an imaging apparatus for performing exposure adjustments based on the luminance of screen images through photoelectric conversion, which includes a structure for providing a signal to be applied to a screen for viewing images, a structure defining a region satisfying a predetermined condition based on where the luminance is excluded from a base region predetermined in the screen signal, and a structure for automatically providing exposure adjustment on the signal based on the luminance of a remaining region in the base region (See Abstract).

That is, Takizawa teaches that an exposure level is adjusted by dividing a base area into a plurality of blocks. Blocks that satisfy a predetermined requirement are eliminated on the basis of a luminance level of each of the blocks. Remaining blocks are weighted based on the position of each block. Precise exposure adjustment of a main object is improved by detecting brightness from the luminance level and weighting in the case that the brightness is a predetermined brightness. A luminance level of each block is generated by dividing the overall image sensing area. As shown in FIG. 5, Takizawa discloses weighting coefficients WP that have a maximum value at the center position of the image sensing area. The values of the weighting coefficients WP are gradually reduced at peripheral positions.

Thus, both Park and Takizawa fail to disclose or suggest an image sensing apparatus comprising "a weighting device which weights a signal component corresponding to inside of a focus detection area sensed by said image sensing device ... wherein said weighting

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device changes a level of weighting in a second area which is *inside of the focus detection area* and outside of a first area which is placed substantially at a center *of inside* of the focus detection area" as required by independent claim 1. Independent claim 5 is believed to define patentable subject matter for similar reasons.

As set forth above, Park fails to disclose the subject matter recited by independent claim 12. Moreover, Takizawa fails to cure the deficiencies of Park. Thus, neither Park nor Takizawa disclose or suggest an image sensing apparatus comprising "a weighting device which weights a signal component corresponding to *inside of* a focus detection area sensed by said image sensing device ... *wherein in the case that a plurality of focus detection areas exist, a weighting value weighted by said weighting device is different from the case that only one focus detection area exists*" as required by claim 12.

Applicants respectfully submit that the present invention as claimed is neither taught nor suggested by, and therefore is neither anticipated nor rendered obvious in view of, Park or Takizawa, alone or in combination. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1-10 and 12-14 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Parks in view of Takizawa.

Dependent Claims

Applicants have not independently addressed the rejections of the dependent claims. Applicants submit that, in view of the amendments to the claims presented herein and, for at least similar reasons as to why the independent claims from which the dependent claims depend are believed allowable as discussed supra, the dependent claims are also allowable. Applicants however, reserve the right to address any individual rejections of the dependent claims should such be necessary or appropriate.

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CONCLUSION

For the above-stated reasons, this application is respectfully asserted to be in condition for allowance. An early and favorable examination on the merits is requested. In the event that a telephone conference would facilitate the examination of this application in any way, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the number provided.

AUTHORIZATION

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees that may be required for consideration of this Amendment to Deposit Account No. 13-4500, Order No. 1232-5228.

In addition, in the event that an extension of time is required, the Commissioner is requested to grant a petition for that extension of time which is required to render this response timely and is hereby authorized to charge any fee for such an extension of time or credit any overpayment for an extension of time to Deposit Account No. 13-4500, Order No. 1232-5228.

Respectfully submitted,
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Dated: March 1, 2006

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